DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 064 567 AC 012 640

AUTHOR	Hutchison, Edward
TITLE	Personal and Professional Values in Adult Education and Community Work. The Frank Milligan Memorial Lecture 1971.
INSTITUTION	National Federation of Community Associations, London (England).
PUB DATE	17 Jul 71
NOTE	11p.; Fifth Frank Milligan Lecture
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Education; *Adult Educators; *Community Organizations; Community Services; Lecture; *Professional Education; *Professional Personnel; *Training Objectives
IDENTIFIERS	*Milligan (Frank)

ABSTRACT

Personal and professional values in adult education and community work are discussed from the standpoint of the growth of professional employment and training for it. Adult education is interpreted as comprising all the deliberate and conscious efforts people make to enlarge and interpret their experience of life. All effective adult education is seen as contributing to community work, and all community work is considered a form of education. A short biographical sketch is given of Frank Milligan, and a summary of his values are quoted from Milligan's Wincham Hall report for 1935-36. Professional organizations that are contributing to the up-grading of the quality of service to the community by their members, and are concerned with protecting the material interests of their members, are briefly described. Measures being used to train professionals in the Community Association Field are said to be inadequate to meet the need. It is stated that professional training must center on the needs and situations of the people who are to be served and not merely on the machinery and instrumentalities used to serve them. (DB)

ED 064567

DUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL VALUES IN ADULT EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY WORK

PROFESSOR
EDWARD HUTCHINSON
O.B.E., M.A., LL.D.

THE FIFTH
FRANK MILLIGAN
LECTURE

AC 012640

The Fifth Frank Milligan Memorial Lecture was given by Professor Edward Hutchinson, O.B.E., M.A., LL.D. in Rutherford College, University of Kent at Canterbury, on the 17th July, 1971 on behalf of the National Federation of Community Associations

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL VALUES IN ADULT EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY WORK

THE FRANK MILLIGAN MEMORIAL LECTURE 1971

by Edward Hutchinson, O.B.E.,M.A.,LL.D.

I was pleased and honoured to be invited to deliver this last lecture in the series devoted to Frank Milligan's memory. When I considered the topic to which I might address myself, I decided that it must be one that would be more personally related to the man whose memory we are honouring than is always customary on such occasions, and this for two reasons. In the first place I knew that in the audience I was asked to address there must now be many who could have little personal awareness of Frank's contribution to adult education and community work as a whole and to the development of the National Federation of Community Associations in particular. Secondly, it would give me an opportunity to revive my own memories of friendship and gratitude for his long years of productive work.

In choosing to speak about personal and professional values in adult education and community work, I had in mind the growth of professional employment and training for it that has been a distinctive mark of recent years. I have myself encouraged and participated in this development in various ways but always with a profound conviction that professional service must be built on the kind of personal values that Frank Milligan exemplified, quite exceptionally, for me and I believe for many others.

Having said this it behoves me, at the outset, to say a little about the man and the values that informed his work as a pioneer professional. Secondly I wish to consider what we now mean by professionalism in adult education and community work and the ways in which it is being encouraged and/or retarded. But as a preliminary I should perhaps say briefly, without getting involved in semantic refinements, how I am interpreting the words 'adult education' and 'community work'.

Quite briefly, so far as I am concerned, adult education comprises all the deliberate and conscious efforts that people make to enlarge and interpret their experience of life. Within these terms all effective adult education contributes to community work and all worth while community work is a form of education. This indeed is the view that I find implicit in everything that Frank wrote although, unfortunately, perhaps, he was invariably too occupied in living his beliefs to spend a great deal of time recording them. It is all the more important, therefore, to know something about his life.

As I have discerned, it begins with childhood experience in a large working class family with a close awareness of neighbourly values and of the intense sectional tensions that so easily accompany them. How this affected his later attitudes he charmingly and movingly recorded in an article 'Old Families and New Neighbourhoods' that I printed in 'Adult Education' in 1956. I am not informed as to how he got to University but I can safely assume that it was by a pretty tough route and I know that his university career was split by military service in the first world war from which he emerged with the soldier's best recognised badges of courage and with injuries, from the later consequences of which he was never wholly free. At Birmingham University, where he resumed studies, he was a founder member of the National Union of Students and by 1922 he was tutoring W.E.A. classes in that area. From the first he seems to have felt that merely to attend a class was an inadequate form of social education and he was an early experimenter with the class conceived as a club. In 1924 he got into the main stream of his life's work as Warden of the Beechcroft Settlement in Birkenhead, the prototype adult education centre pioneered by Horace Fleming, and there he remained until the unemployment pressures of the 1930s, on depressed Merseyside, directed his attention to another sphere.

From 1933 to 1939 he and his wife, after a short experience elsewhere, were the inspiring leaders of Wincham Hall, a residential educational centre for the unemployed and it is particularly to his experience at Wincham that I want to refer a little later. Wincham incidentally, although rarely so recorded, was clearly a forerunner of the colleges offering short residential courses that were established from 1945 onwards.

He spent the years of the second world war as an Army Welfare Officer and Forces Lecturer, and joined the National Council of Social Service in 1944 to become the General Secretary of the nascent National Federation of Community Associations. In that post he remained until his retirement in 1959. There are not many people even now who have spent a full working life in such a succession of pioneering assignments, remembering also that each of them was a base for forays into many supplementary activities. In the later years, in which I was personally acquainted with him, I think particularly of his attempts to organise a Television Viewers' Council, very different in tone

from that now associated with the name of Mrs. Whitehouse, and his realisation, well ahead of my own, of the potential importance of the European Bureau of Adult Education, of which I am currently the President.

So much, in very brief, for the man. What were the beliefs and attitudes that informed this long continued activity? Looking through the material available to me, I decided that I need not go further than the Wincham Hall report for 1935/36 for an effective summary of his values, and I propose to quote from this document at some length as examplifying a number of specific points.

But a man reveals himself not only by his own words but by the assent he gives to the utterances of others. Two short texts precede the contents of the Wincham Hall report to which I am referring. From William Morris, Frank took the statement:

> "What I claim is liberal education: opportunity, that is, to have my share of whatever knowledge there is in the world according to my capacity or bent of mind ... and also to have my share of skill of hand which is about in the world, either in the industrial handicrafts or the fine arts."

and to this he added, from H.G. Wells' 'The Anatomy of Frustration':

> "When I write of democracy in a favourable sense, I intend no more and no less than this, that every human being shall be given all the opportunity that can be given, to contribute to human achievement just as far as his or her will and power go. Privileges of birth, advantage of wealth, race barriers, are sins against this democratic reality."

From the report itself I have culled a number of paragraphs that I believe illustrate the texts that I have pre-fixed to them as follows:

<u>Self-discovery is the key to action</u>

> "When Wincham Hall was opened as a residential centre ... it was thought that a group of men living together for a period away from the immediate pressure of economic conditions, and provided with suitable guidance, might obtain a clearer

knowledge of their own needs and interests, and discover ways in which they might be satisfied ... What matters is the contribution the individual can make to the communal experience, and what he can draw from it."

Instruction alone is not education

"Adam Smith pointed out long ago that 'the understandings of the greater part of men are necessarily formed by their ordinary employments' and that often in his work a man finds 'no occasion to exert his understanding or to exercise his invention in finding out expedients for overcoming difficulties which never occur'. Even in craft classes students often work too much under instruction, and the product of their skill is imitative rather than creative. The impatient instructor may forget that he is an educator, and will be tempted to think for his student. Out of their interest in practical work, we have tried to help men to think for themselves, by giving them training in arithmetic, in drawing, and in showing them how to devise expedients, and to use the materials which lie to hand."

Society wastes the educational potential of a large part of its members

"The choice of optional subjects has indicated clearly important needs. The subjects were chosen quite freely each term, but there was little variation, and in them and other class work was revealed the terrible wastage which occurs after leaving school at fourteen years of age ... The waste is two-fold. There is the thirst for information and further education with which many young men of this age (18 - 25) are undoubtedly possessed, and which goes unsatisfied. It is deplorable that many of those who should know better think the needs of these young men can be wholly met by games and physical training or merely by hard physical work. There is waste, too, in that so much which has been learned has been lost. Even if we agreed that education should be limited to the three R's, there is very little of this knowledge left when a man has spent nearly ten years without realising the possibility of their use."

There can be no democracy without education

"A much larger number than those who have forgotten their letters or numbers may be classified as politically illiterate. Again, this is not due to any lack of intelligence. It is because the sense of political responsibility has never been roused. Wincham itself has been criticised because discussions on politics and economic questions are encouraged. Since democracy can only thrive on discussion and the free expression of opinion, such criticism is not merely foolish but suicidal. One wonders if these critics realise the implication of being afraid that an unemployed man may think for himself. This business of thinking for oneself is at the root of all our difficulties. Most of the men who have been to Wincham have never had a chance of finding out what their interests were, and how their capacities might be developed. They did not know what life could offer."

Adult education proceeds from interaction of the formal and the informal

"I think it will be realised that much of our educational work is of an informal nature and of a type which could only be effectively carried out in a residential centre where teachers and students are living together. No real progress could be achieved, however, if it remained wholly informal. The value of the informal is in its relation to the formal and vice-versa. By formal education we mean a consistent attempt to obtain knowledge by attending a class or by setting aside certain hours for systematic study. The relationship between teacher and student in adult education must necessarily be informal, and the methods of teaching may be unorthodox, but the work must be regular and purposeful. Although there is little difficulty in organising such classwork in the residential centre, one can understand that even when there are no statutory regulations, there may be difficulties in the non-residential centre arising from the casual membership and the ever-present shadow of unemployment."

Individual choice is the basis of a free community

"The importance of all this, however, is not just personal. The community is the richer by the number of real persons it contains, and it is only when people have knowledge and freedom to create and appreciate and criticise that the community can add anything to its wisdom, grace and beauty. Moreover, in a democratic country social organisation rests on personal responsibility and on the active participation of its citizens in the art and practice of government ... Perhaps the greatest need of all today, is to learn the art of communal living - to develop the understanding of, and a sensitiveness to the wants of other people, and with them to frame some sort of common end. To put it another way, we must learn that the satisfying activity we want to pursue as persons, must also be socially desirable, if it is to be really satisfying. Our failure here is reflected as much in the tragedies of our Juvenile Police Courts as in the tragedy of international affairs. One apparent way of meeting the need is by restrictive measures of all kinds, by the imposition of a state discipline. We believe that this is shirking the real issue ... Wincham is democracy's reply to the concentration camp."

Adult education is a permanent necessity

"It has been suggested to us that if our educational system were improved, if, for example, the school-leaving age were raised and secondary education properly related to elementary education, there would be no need of adult education, and no need of Winchams. Adult education, however, has never been conceived as a compensation for deficiencies in earlier education. It came into existence to meet the needs of adults, and our experience convinces us that the better earlier education is, the more effective the use that can be made of educational opportunities. The effect of improved juvenile and adolescent education would be more likely to increase the demand for the opportunities we offer, and to improve the standard of our work."

I have set out these extracts at some length because not only do they express the firmness of the concepts and practices related to them that distinguished all Frank Milligan's work, but they amount virtually to a prospectus for contemporary professional training. I am struck by the extent to which, for lack of a clearly stated rationale, we have constantly to rediscover such distillations of experience. The danger, now, is that in the attempt to do so, we may envelop them in a pseudo-language very different from the clarity and directness of the quotations I have used. I find it encouraging, nevertheless, that the spirit of humane radicalism that breathes through them is still alive and finding expression in many places. But is this what we are meaning by professional service?

I like to take my stand on the belief that a professional is a person who professes a vocation - a calling. He may join with others to assert the dignity of that calling and to seek appropriate reward for it. But without descending into asceticism, what is to be done will always be more important to the true professional than the conventional reward for doing it, and the doing will, indeed, be in large measure the uncovenanted reward itself.

Can we in fact train for such virtue, for caritas? It must at least be our aim in a world of constant flux and uncertain values. Just now the lessons of Wincham Hall have a sharper and more immediate relevance, faced as we are with nearly a million unemployed, than at any time since 1939. But we have had thirty years in which to learn that the moulding of community from responsibly choosing individuals can be as threatened by an overload of material well-being as by its absence. Against that background, let us see what we are doing about professional service and appropriate trainirg for it.

Many of us, I think, have come to accept that expansion of the educational impulse in mature life must depend on enlarging the cadre of people who can act as stimulators and multipliers of the uncertain and inevitably limited efforts of the true volunteers, the men and women of good will who for the most part have to sustain themselves and their families by some other form of productive work. In the last ten years, particularly, there has been a recognisable increase in the numbers of people employed by universities and by local education authorities to give such professional service and the same is true, less markedly perhaps, in other fields - Community Associations, the Workers' Educational Association, the women's organisations. These new professionals, still very much aware of their marginal status, have set up a constellation

of small professional bodies, e.g. Continuative Teachers, Community Service Workers', Youth Officers. There is an Association for Adult Education representing not, as its title might suggest, the totality of work in these different sectors, but confined to principals of centres and organisers of adult education directly employed by local education authorities.

All these organisations, however inadequately they are equipped to do so, are concerned to protect the material interests of their members, but within my experience they are also deeply concerned with the quality of the service their members are able to give and it is from their ranks that the pressure comes increasingly for that extension of training that will contribute to both ends. There has been a certain drawing together of these small detached units in the Liaison Committee of Professional Workers in Adult Education and one could wish to see this body achieving a greater substance and coherence, because what has not so far emerged is a clear concensus as to what training should mean and whether the immediate objectives of Community Association Wardens, Adult Education Tutors, Educational Centre and Evening Institute Principals are sufficiently inter-related to provide a basis for at least a common core of training - the 'in-word', I suppose, is 'generic'.

I know that many of you in this body are not entirely happy about the present provision for training in the Community Association field. Apart from the work you promote directly yourselves, five universities are feeling their way forward in the provision of full and part-time diploma courses in adult education. When they have included within their syllabuses the term 'Community Development' they have normally been thinking more of the overseas than of the domestic situation. Many local education authorities are operating internal or sharing in regional training measures and a few of them dispose singly of a larger number of professional staff than existed in total, outside London, two decades ago.

In this obscure and confused situation we now have a quickening of official policy in the matter of shared premises for community purposes and a National Committee of Enquiry into Adult Education which, without direct mention of it, certainly extends, as you have recognised, into the Community Association field. I wish I felt that we were more effectively united to meet these considerable challenges.

I am bound to ask myself whether the body I myself have served for nearly twenty-five years, the National Institute of Adult Education, has, in recent times, taken full benefit from the experience of your Association.

The Institute has inevitably been much concerned with that upsurge of activity in some local education authorities that could give reality to the blueprint for development that was implicit in the duty imposed on authorities by the Education Act of 1944 to contribute to the education, not only of the children but of 'the people' of England and Wales. I recently came across a report of a conference of the N.F.C.A. in 1946, when Mr. Sewell Harris recognised and welcomed the opportunity for the development of Community Association work that their extended powers offered to local education authorities. I know that in the disappointing lean years he has recoiled from his earlier endorsement of the local education authority as the proper focus for community education. But today, although still only in a few areas, it begins to be a reality and poses very urgently the need for a closer interworking between the professional servants of the authorities and the activists, whether professional or voluntary, of other promoting bodies, public and private.

There are many other signs of renewed concern for the quality of community life and if we are to take full advantage of them we need to get back to Frank Milligan's clear-eyed understanding that the quality of a community rests unambiguously on the quality of its individual members. This means that professional training, without losing sight of the value of efficient practice, must be centred on the needs and situations of the men and women to be served and aided and not merely on the machinery and instrumentalities through which we seek to serve them. Similarly we have to harness methods of communication to our tasks and not ourselves be shackled to them. I remember well those later years when Frank played the leading role in seeking appropriate relations between the receiving public and the immense forces of television. It was difficult and uphill work but not without its consequences.

I would like to leave with you, for reflection in this time when we are certainly moving towards a widened professional service in adult education and community work, the degree to which Frank Milligan understood the significance of one of Blake's paradoxes: "He who would do good to another man must do it in minute particulars. General good is the plea of the hypocrite, scoundrel and flatterer". As we go forward, in the face of all our difficulties, we can draw inspiration and strength from remembrance of a professed man for whom democracy and education were the twin and equal pillars supporting the arch of the good society, who had strength to meet adversity, clarity in his purposes, dignity in his conduct and who could say with Terence "I am a man, I think nothing human foreign to me".

Published by
The National Federation of Community Associations
26 Bedford Square, London, WC1B 3HU

ERIC Clearinghouse
JUL 10 1972
on Adult Education